COVID Smart and GF Nation Strong! -- 2022 NSPRA Gold Medallion Entry

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PreK-12 Public School District 1,996 Students
One full-time communications employee

*Please consider this entry for a Golden Achievement Award
COVID-19 COMMUNICATION: SYNOPSIS

It seems fitting that the last “normal” day of school in Glens Falls was Friday, the 13th of March, 2020. As the world changed—literally by the hour during those first days of new-crisis chaos—our small community was left stunned. Information became a commodity as important as bathroom tissue. Trusted relationships became the lynchpin holding together our “Hometown, USA” school community’s physical, mental, and emotional health. And the timing of each guidance/response cycle approached Ludicrous Speed.

We wanted to preserve and grow relationships with our stakeholders throughout the COVID-19 crisis by maintaining authenticity in our messages. That meant providing frequent evidence of the stability/agility of the district’s pandemic response efforts, promoting calmness of tone, and showing genuine care for the physical and mental well-being of each school community member.

Early efforts focused heavily on food service for students, with the reward of more than half the student body participating in our emergency meal program. Our team executed a budget vote in June, held entirely by absentee ballot, under shifting directives, within nearly impossible timeframes—and the budget passed with an 82% approval rate, and the highest voter turnout in memory. We brought families into the excitement of commencement by live-streaming a special diploma ceremony on the high school football field, one of many “firsts” this year.

Summer brought a shift to crafting a school reopening plan that balanced state requirements with stakeholder sentiments. District leaders wove extensive survey feedback, five virtual forum interactions, and almost 200 pages of rules into a comprehensive and evolving roadmap back into our classrooms. Our community said yes to the plan by choosing in-person instruction for 82% of all students.

Our doors opened in September and have stayed open, thanks to the whole of “GF Nation” buying into health and safety practices--even as they evolve through Year 2. We paid attention to pandemic trends and used school-based rapid testing, and later, school-based vaccine clinics to rebuild our school community and move forward.

So here’s how it all unfolded...
PHASE 1: INITIAL SHUTDOWN CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

MARCH - JUNE, 2020

Navigating the first hours and days of our shutdown scenario felt eerily similar to producing the local broadcast news through 9/11. Our own emotions got thrown into the back seat while we tried to keep both hands on the wheel—with fear, rumors, official guidance, political speculation, and hard infection data squirrel spying into the road from all directions. Our people were looking to us for honest assessments of a changing reality … right now.

GFSD went from being fully open with simple enhanced cleaning procedures, to a five-week shutdown, to a two-week shutdown within a matter of 49 hours that first long weekend. Staff returned to campus Monday for a 9 a.m. all-staff meeting, only to be called back to the auditorium at 3 p.m. with the directive to take whatever they need from classrooms because they won’t be back for weeks. In the days that followed, the leadership team worked around the clock to decipher official state guidance as one directive superseded another, while quickly determining the district’s response to each.

META-RESEARCH

Crisis communications are most effective when they’re deployed within a trusted relationship framework already well-established with stakeholder groups. Glens Falls had spent a decade building a reputation for being the first and best source of information on our schools, and cultivating a truly two-way system of knowledge exchange.

GFSD headed into the COVID-19 crisis from a position of relative strength, already employing:

- A communications philosophy rooted in the belief that if people have the right information, they can always make the best decisions for themselves and their families. Our job is to give them command of that information, in its truest, most robust, and easiest-to-understand form.
- Fully-functioning tactical resources, including a mass communications system (Blackboard) tied to our student database, a secondary, subscription-based mass communications system (School News Notifier) reaching 2,475 community members, and social media platforms (primarily Facebook, approximately 4K followers strong) that have created meaningful dialogues with stakeholders on multiple levels.
- A culture of engagement and action, based on an extensive SWOT analysis and SMART goal development in 2015-16, followed by school and district effectiveness surveys from 2016-19, used to inform a comprehensive improvement plan still in use today. High standards and trauma-informed relationship norms have been in place.

Additionally, we knew going into the crisis that 49% of our students qualified for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, with two of our five schools designated as community-eligible. Students and families depended on the district for a significant portion of their daily nutrition, even before pandemic job loss came into play.

One structural limitation is that Glens Falls does not provide daily transportation for general education students—everyone except students with special needs or special circumstances walks to school each day. As such, our school bus and van fleet is small in comparison to student enrollment, and drop-off routes for the majority of our population did not exist.
CRISIS-SPECIFIC RESEARCH

Every communications professional in America has lived her/his own experience in connecting their people with the right resources at the right times during this year-long pandemic. It took a lot of information-gathering to meet the pandemic-related intelligence needs of our students, families, staff, and community. During this initial shutdown crisis, this included:

- Real-time monitoring of the New York Governor’s daily press briefings for pandemic developments, followed by a dissection of the follow-up Executive Orders and/or official State Ed/State Health guidance on: physical building closures; a complete budget vote/board of education election shift; provision of daily food service; remote learning expectations; gathering restrictions (graduation); student assessments, and more.
- Daily, and later, near-daily internal cabinet briefings/discussions/emails to formulate our district response to each development.
- Near-hourly monitoring of Facebook comments to gauge how information was being received, and what further questions parents/teachers/students had.
- Prompt attention to direct email replies from any stakeholder—providing individual responses, but also spotting any trends in information gap so a broader response could be developed.
- Use of family survey data to determine meal utilization district-wide, and then plan for distribution/delivery to more than half of our entire student population.
- Use of family survey data to facilitate regional child care for essential workers.
- Following developments from federal and state child nutrition agencies that allowed meal service to be expanded and fully reimbursed.

PLANNING/IMPLEMENTATION

The full GFSD cabinet (superintendent, two asst. superintendents, four directors, five principals) collaborated on each crisis response action, with the communications director handling message development, resource coordination/design, and outreach. No additional budget allocations were made for communication vehicles that weren’t already in place, except for a $300 purchase of four months of Switcher Studio livestream production software.

TACTICAL PLAN for Phase 1: including roles, responsibilities, and timeline

GOAL #1: Provide factual, corroborated, timely information about state and local guidance, tailored to audience subgroups, with clear explanations of the district’s response to each

- **Outcome 1-1:** Parents and Staff empowered with details to combat fear, maintain some educational connections, plan for pandemic adjustments.
Strategy 1.1a: Use email/robocall/Facebook communications near-daily during the outset of the crisis to inform stakeholders and collect feedback

- KEY MESSAGES INCLUDED:
  - March 4: General information for families
  - March 8: Precautionary self-quarantine for exposure
  - March 9: WTEN news coverage on precautions taken district-wide
  - March 10: Disinfection protocols and issues related to closure discussion
  - March 12: Weekend building closures; events postponed
  - March 14: Initial shutdown; being responsive rather than reactionary (*key communication)
  - March 15: Chromebook pickup, WiFi availability, Grab-and-Go meals
  - March 16: 9 a.m. district-wide staff meeting slides (*key communication that was fully rescinded at 3 p.m. due to complete system-wide closure)
  - March 17: New order from Governor; continued learning at home (*key communication)
  - March 19: Coordinating child care for essential workers
  - March 27: Closure extended to April 15; meal pickup now M-W-F
  - March 30: Budget vote postponed to June; superintendent in-depth media interview
  - April 8: Curriculum update on exam/course requirements, K-12 remote learning experience (*key communication)
  - April 16: Closure extended to May 15, staying mentally and physically healthy
  - April 17: Facebook comment thread when our buses encountered long delays on first day of meal delivery (*key dialogue/responsivity example)
  - May 1: Schools closed for rest of year (through June 25)
  - May 29: Last day of instruction is June 17

Strategy 1.1b: Ensure our three non-English-speaking families, and families with technological or housing barriers receive and understand information and can access the supports available

- Phone calls and home visits for delivery of supplies/meals by SST (Student Support Teams) at each school building, led by psychologist/social worker
- Individual and group phone calls, Google Meets, and delivery or coordination on a case-by-case basis
GOAL #2: Preserve and grow relationships with staff/families/students/community by maintaining authenticity in communications — providing frequent evidence of the stability/agility of the district’s pandemic response efforts, promoting calmness of tone, and showing genuine care for the physical and mental well-being of each school community member.

➔ **Outcome 2-1**: Parents will engage with updated district response information and mental health resources to support themselves and their children at home

➔ **Strategy 2-1.a**: Use frequent, trauma-informed communications to assist parents in managing their family’s emotional needs

◆ **KEY MESSAGES INCLUDED:**

◆ **March 11**: Mental health and factual information caregivers can use with children (*key communication)

◆ **March 18**: Calmly guiding children through news; meal pickup routine

◆ **March 23**: Social-emotional support page launched

◆ **March 24**: Settling into a routine; helping children with stress

◆ **April 3**: Must-see videos for weekend; maintaining parents’ mental health (*key communication)

◆ **April 16**: Closure extended to May 15, staying mentally and physically healthy (referenced in Goal #1)

● **Outcome 2-2**: Every child within the district who needs or wants meals gets fed. Children maintain/improve physical nourishment, and parents have one less concern while navigating income disruption. At least 45% of the student population utilizes meal service (equal to the district’s overall free lunch eligibility).

➔ **Strategy 2-2.a**: Inform families of meal availability and promote meal pick-up opportunities for students. Use email, robo-call phone messages, Facebook, and website promotions.

◆ **March 16**: Grab-and-Go meal pickup begins tomorrow

◆ **April 8**: Meal service switching to delivery

◆ **April 21**: How you can help GFSD meal delivery

➔ **Strategy 2-2.b**: Pre-populate and deploy a survey to allow parents to verify their address for meal delivery, indicate how many of their children would like meals, and list any food allergies or special nutritional needs.

➔ **Strategy 2-2.c**: Use collected survey data to build bus routes for meal delivery. Outside transportation company provided first overall route listings, but as families changed their preferences each week (adding or dropping meal service), key GFSD staff members manually edited each route weekly. Communicate and coordinate with asst. superintendent for business, directors of transportation and food service, bus drivers, volunteer staff members to arrange schedules, provide substitutes, and manage on-site load-ups.
GOAL #3: Hold a successful, NYS-compliant school budget vote and board of education elections—within a shifted and compressed timetable, a pivot to entirely absentee balloting, and minimal lead time given by New York State. Voter participation increases at least 10% over prior year.

- **Outcome 3-1**: Voters approve the operating budget for 2020-21 because they understand both the key elements of the spending plan, and how to participate in the emergency voting process.
  - **Strategy 3-1a**: Create budget breakdown materials as per regular annual communications plan, including: webpage, printed newsletter, “Budget Fast Facts” graphics and corresponding alerts, etc.
  - **Strategy 3-1b**: Distill the emergency voting process into understandable instructions for voters, in both written and infographic format
    - KEY MESSAGES INCLUDED:
      - Budget Fast Fact #2: How do I vote by absentee ballot?
      - Budget Fast Fact #6: Returning your ballot

GOAL #4: Celebrate the Class of 2020 by providing a high-quality, in-house live stream production of a diploma ceremony, along with high-quality ceremony portraits of each graduate for their families, free of charge. Accomplish both of these elements with one staff member because we literally couldn’t have any more individuals in the facility, due to the state’s 150-person gathering limit.

- **Outcome 4-1**: Parents, faculty, friends feel connected to/proud of their graduate by watching the live ceremony they cannot attend in person
  - **Strategy 4-1a**: Acquire, learn, and then creatively use Switcher Studio to broadcast a 45-minute diploma ceremony on June 26, 2020, created to replace our traditional graduation. All camera inputs were district-networked iPads or iPhones.
    - 2020 Diploma Ceremony: GFHS
  - **Strategy 4-1b**: Post-production, edited the broadcast to drop in portraits of the dozen students who weren’t recorded walking because the main iPad used for that camera angle overheated in the sun. Yes, really.

- **Outcome 4-2**: Families and students receive free, professional-quality portraits of their graduate, since they cannot be there to take their own pictures
  - **Strategy 4-2a**: Take, minimally edit, and catalog candid/portraits of each graduate. Provide password-protected download links to parents and students.
EVALUATION

● **Outcome 1-1**: Parents and Staff empowered with details to combat fear, maintain some educational connections, plan for pandemic adjustments
  ○ School community members felt confident enough in the district’s communications that they chose to forward emails, tag friends, and comment on posts, which led to even more school community empowerment with:
    ■ An increase of 368 Facebook page likes between March 1, 2020 (3,285) and June 30, 2020 (3,653)
    ■ An increase of 411 SNN subscribers between June 2019 (2,041) and June 2020 (2,452)
    ■ A total organic reach on Facebook that grew from a few hundred to a few thousand, pre-pandemic, to several thousand, post-pandemic.

● **Outcome 2-1**: Parents will engage with updated district response information and mental health resources to support themselves and their children at home
  ○ Selection of FB post analytics from March-June 2020

● **Outcome 2-2**: Every child within the district who needs or wants meals gets fed. Children maintain/improve physical nourishment, and parents have one less concern while navigating income disruption. At least 45% of the student population utilizes meal service (equal to the district’s overall free lunch eligibility).
  ○ Utilization rate for meal delivery topped 490 families, with approximately 1,106 children receiving meals as of the May 22, 2020 delivery run spreadsheet. This equates to 56% of the total student body. Goal to meet or exceed 45% utilization was achieved and bettered by 11 percentage points.

● **Outcome 3-1**: Voters approve the operating budget for 2020-21 because they understand both the key elements of the spending plan, and how to participate in the emergency voting process. Voter participation increases at least 10% over prior year.
  ○ The school budget and bus lease proposition passed with over 82% of the vote, in record-breaking turnout from at least 15 years’ worth of votes (2,729 total ballots cast). Goal to increase voter participation by 10% over 2019 results (523 total ballots cast in 2019) was achieved and bettered by more than 400%.

● **Outcome 4-1**: Parents, faculty, friends feel connected to/proud of their graduate by watching the live ceremony they cannot attend in person
  ○ The broadcast got 690 views and 4 likes on the district’s YouTube channel.

● **Outcome 4-2**: Families and students receive free, professional-quality portraits of their graduate, since they cannot be there to take their own pictures
  ○ Photos from the gallery of 142 graduates were downloaded nearly 800 times
  ○ Several parents sent heart-warming emails to the district, expressing their thanks
By July 1, 2020, the acute COVID-19 caseload in Warren County had lowered, and overall district communications shifted from pants-on-fire crisis communications to high-stakes school reopening engagement.

**RESEARCH**

On July 9, the district developed and sent its first student, staff, and parent return-to-school surveys. These surveys collected quantifiable data and open-ended feedback from more than 700 parent/guardian responses, nearly 450 student responses, and more than 200 faculty/staff responses.

- 54 percent of student respondents said yes, they feel safe returning to school (with 16 percent responding no, and 30 percent undecided).
- 43 percent of staff respondents said they are slightly or very concerned about their health and well-being returning to in-person school (with 27 percent not very concerned, and 29 percent in the middle).
- Parent respondents said they feel safe about sending their child to school with: regular temperature checks (54%); all teachers/staff wearing masks (51%); in-person social distancing procedures (49%); staggered student schedules (48%); and students wearing masks (44%).
- Staff member respondents said they feel safe returning to school with: regular temperature checks (65%); all teachers/staff wearing masks (65%); in-person social distancing procedures (64%); staggered student schedules (63%); and students wearing masks (57%).
- The majority of parents and staff members feel they understand pandemic-related trauma and how it will affect the return to school process (90% of staff, and 76% of parents).

On July 14, the NYS Department of Health released requirements for schools to reopen in the fall. Then on July 16, the NYS Education Department released additional, robust guidance and requirements for reopening in the fall. Major shifts to educational structure and protocols included:

- Appropriate face coverings are to be worn at all times by all individuals when six feet of social distancing can’t be maintained (with exceptions for socially-distanced snacks/meals, during socially-distanced instruction, and short mask breaks).
- Classrooms must be configured to allow for six feet of space between individuals. This equates to approximately 12 students per room for most GFSD classrooms.
- Rigorous and ongoing cleaning and disinfecting is required, as per DOH hygiene/cleaning practices.
- All individuals must have their temperature checked each day - ideally, at home, prior to departing for school. All staff members must also complete a daily health questionnaire.

On July 25, the district sent its second parent survey on reopening framework options, in order to inform development of the district’s official reopening plan, due to the NYS Education Department by July 31—just 15 days after the full 168 pages of guidance was released to school leaders.
PLANNING/IMPLEMENTATION

The full GFSD cabinet (superintendent, two asst. superintendents, four directors, five principals) collaborated throughout the reopening plan process, with the communications director handling message development, resource coordination/design, and outreach. No additional communications budget allocations were made in this phase.

**TACTICAL PLAN** for Phase 2: including roles, responsibilities, and timeline

**GOAL #1:** Write a reopening plan that remains **compliant** with state- and local-level health and safety directives, incorporates **specific ideas and school community sentiments**, and can be **implemented** within budgetary constraints.

- **Outcome 1-1:** A complete but evolving plan is submitted to the state and our school community by July 31, 2020.
  - **Strategy 1-1a:** Develop, deploy, and analyze quantitative and qualitative data from student, faculty/staff, and parent return-to-school surveys to determine sentiment and trends; report aggregate results to internal and external stakeholders; facilitate superintendent use of results to inform reopening plan; compile school building physical space evaluations
  - **Strategy 1-1b:** Annotate state guidance documents to be sure all required plan conditions are met; seek clarification on conflicting interpretations; incorporate requirements into district plan
  - **Strategy 1-1c:** Collaborate with superintendent and asst. superintendents to compose, revise, and submit the final reopening plan on time. (*Key communication*)

**GOAL #2:** Educate stakeholder groups on the reopening plan, detailing plan components, fully addressing concerns or questions, discussing reactions, and incorporating feedback into development of systems/daily procedures.

- **Outcome 2-1:** Families and faculty/staff members fully understand the reopening plan components. Every question/comment posted on Facebook or via email is answered within 12 hours of receipt.
  - **Strategy 2-1a:** Develop written communications, graphics, and feedback forms to educate school community members about our specific plan; disseminate via email/robocall/Facebook communications.
    - District website [page](#) to house/archive chronological updates
    - **July 31:** Key points within the GFSD reopening plan with [support graphics](#)
    - **August 3:** FAQ - outlines of each instructional model
    - **August 4:** First virtual parent forum planned, submit your questions
Strategy 2-1b: Produce five live-streamed virtual forums for parents and faculty/staff members to answer (every) reopening question submitted by feedback form, direct email, or Facebook comment. Use Switcher Studio streaming software, live Google Form monitoring for questions, and pre-produced slide graphics. Ensure closed-caption subtitles are available in Chinese and Spanish for non-English-speaking families.

- August 6: Parent/Public Forum #1 live stream recording, slide deck
- August 12: Parent/Public Forum #2 live stream recording, slide deck
- August 18: Parent/Public Forum #3 live stream recording, slide deck
- August 19: Faculty/Staff Internal Forum live stream recording, slide deck
- August 20: Parent/Public Forum #4 live stream recording, slide deck

Strategy 2-1c: Write, direct, shoot, and edit a reopening video that shows new student protocols in action

- It's a New Day in Glens Falls: Back-to-School Protocols 2020

GOAL #3: Implement the reopening plan in September, 2020 and show the plan in action inside schools

- Outcome 3-1: Parents and students feel confident enough with the reopening plan parameters that 90% of all students choose and remain with the in-person/hybrid learning model for the Fall 2020 semester/trimester. Fewer than 25% of students who start in-person/hybrid switch to all-remote learning.

- Strategy 3-1: Create four “first day of school” Facebook photo albums, detailing the staggered return of students to each building and showing protocols being followed

- GF Nation goes back to school: Tuesday, Sept. 8, Wednesday, Sept. 9, Thursday, Sept. 10, Friday, Sept. 11
EVALUATION

- **Outcome 1-1**: A complete but evolving plan is submitted to the state and our school community by July 31, 2020.
  - The GFSD reopening plan was accepted by the state with no deficiencies noted.
  - The plan release Facebook post reached more than 16K people and generated additional dialogue comments.
  - Reopening press coverage included three A1 print stories, and multiple TV news packages.
- **Outcome 2-1**: Families and faculty/staff members fully understand the reopening plan components. Every question/comment posted on Facebook or via email is answered within 12 hours of receipt.
  - Virtual forums had a combined total of 6,620 views.
  - Each successive forum’s question/answer period was shorter than the previous forum's (due to all posed questions being answered in real time; people stopped submitting questions).
  - Analysis of communications office email communications and Facebook post responses showed that answers were sent/posted within 12 hours nearly 85% of the time between July 1 and August 31.
- **Outcome 3-1**: Parents and students feel confident enough with the reopening plan parameters that 90% of all students choose and remain with the in-person/hybrid learning model for the Fall 2020 semester/trimester. Fewer than 25% of students who start in-person/hybrid switch to all-remote learning.
  - 82% of families district-wide (1,735 students) chose in-person/hybrid instruction in August of 2020, slightly short of our ambitious 90% goal outcome.
  - Fewer than 20 students who began in the in-person/hybrid model in September switched to the all-virtual model by December, 2020, well below the attrition goal of 25% or fewer.
PHASE 3: GROWING THROUGH HYBRID/REMOTE LEARNING, ADJUSTING TO A
“NEW NORMAL”
SEPTEMBER, 2020 - FEBRUARY, 2022

I’ll be honest: my personal over/under bet on how long we’d be able to stay in school was October 1, 2020. And I was delightfully wrong! Students, employees, and families adapted well to the new routines, and took the health and safety protocols seriously. Our pandemic communications effort evolved into maintaining awareness and diligence around protocols, handling a temporary emergency shut-down, implementing school-based COVID-19 rapid testing of students, and hosting on-site vaccine clinics for students and adults.

RESEARCH

Ongoing through this time period:

- Daily monitoring of pandemic developments from the NY Governor, and the Warren County Health Department, particularly as they relate to COVID clusters and changing state guidance.
- Regular internal cabinet briefings/discussions/emails to formulate our district response to each development.
- Prompt attention to direct email replies from any stakeholder—providing individual responses, but also spotting any information-gap trends so a broader response could be developed.
- Evaluation of CDC guidance on vaccine efficacy, consultation with the Warren County Public Health vaccine team to develop and implement plans for school-based vaccine clinics.

PLANNING/IMPLEMENTATION

The full GFSD cabinet (superintendent, two asst. superintendents, four directors, five principals) collaborated throughout the reopening plan process, with the communications director handling message development, resource coordination/design, and outreach. No additional communications budget allocations were made in this phase.

TACTICAL PLAN for Phase 3: including roles, responsibilities, and timeline

GOAL #1: Remain open for quality in-person instruction for every one of our 1,996 K-12 students.

- **Outcome 1-1:** Students and staff can consistently remain in school for learning because they understand and buy into health and safety protocols. They are able to decipher which cohorts of students attend in-person on what schedules. They modify personal behaviors for the continued health of all.
  - **Strategy 1-1.a:** Build form, implement, and monitor data within the Student Health Questionnaire and Staff/Visitor Health Questionnaire. Coordinate with building nurses and HR director upon positive screening results.
  - **Strategy 1-1.b:** Provide clear reminders of the complicated in-person learning schedules.
    - Daily schedule emails for parents in the first week of school: Tuesday, Sept. 8, Wednesday, Sept. 9, Thursday, Sept. 10, Friday, Sept. 11, Monday, Sept. 14
    - Syncable Google Calendars populated by building cohort
Strategy 1-1.c: Provide accurate, timely, even-toned notifications to school community members upon protocol shifts, or identification of a positive case and resulting quarantines
- Oct. 2: Reminder to GF families on protocols
- Oct. 14: COVID “presumed positive” designation and return-to-school protocols
- Oct. 21: Considering COVID in gatherings for holidays, activities, and celebrations
- Case notifications: Oct. 23: First positive case (student); Oct. 26: Second positive case (student); COVID Update: Feb 2, etc.

Strategy 1-1.d: Persuade families and employees to maintain high COVID-prevention strategies by explaining protocols, and providing information on pandemic trends. Create dedicated web page for case notifications and vaccine clinic availability.
- Key event: Town Hall Nov. 8, 2021 slide deck (*key communication)
- Nov. 13: Testing out of a travel quarantine, ripple effects
- Feb. 4: Super Bowl parties and February break travel
- Oct. 2: Parent Update: New flowcharts provided by NYSDOH; Reminder to Glens Falls families on protocols

 Outcome 1-2: Students and staff members voluntarily participate in a school-based, district-run COVID-19 rapid-testing program to help prevent asymptomatic spread, and later, to allow student-athletes to participate in higher-risk sports.

Strategy 1-2.a: Design, communicate, and implement a school-based COVID rapid testing program for asymptomatic students and employees. (Developed in anticipation of state directive which never materialized; Used as part of the district’s reopening plan after a multi-week crisis-induced shutdown in January, 2021)
- Nov. 23: “Yellow Zone” preparations and consent for school-based COVID-19 testing (*key communication)
- COVID testing logistical plan (replicated at each school site) (*key communication)
- Testing selection parent notification language
- Jan. 14: District to pilot school-based COVID testing
- Jan. 20: District will resume in-person hybrid with testing

Strategy 1-2.b: Script, direct, shoot, and edit a video specifically for K-4 students that explains a nasal swab test and outlines procedures for elementary-level school-based testing. Provide a building-specific version for each elementary school (three).
- Dec. 18: Watch “The Nosey Swab Swipe” with your kids, complete testing consent (*key communication)
- Video also played in classrooms, as part of morning meeting or daily announcements during weeks leading up to implementation

Outcome 1-3: Students and staff can safely transition back into the classroom after a multi-week emergency shutdown brought on by reckless behavior of school community members. Families know how to access resources during the period of remote learning.
Strategy 1-3.a: Provide an appropriate amount of factual information about the necessity to close for two weeks; dialogue with stakeholders as possible within an emotionally-charged and privacy-protected arena
  ◆ Dec. 28: GFSD going remote in January (*key communication)
  ◆ Significant monitoring of comment dialogue on corresponding Facebook post
  ◆ Jan. 8: positive case update

Strategy 1-3b: Promote available resources during remote learning, encourage stakeholder groups to meet the remote learning challenge
  ◆ Jan. 10: Meal bag pickups
  ◆ Jan. 4: Thanks for your grit

Strategy 1-3.c: Update school community members on plans and schedule for returning to in-person learning
  ◆ Jan. 12 Update: K-6 return on 1/19
  ◆ Jan. 14: District to pilot school-based COVID testing (referenced above)

Outcome 1-4: Student-athletes can more safely compete in a shortened winter sports season. No COVID spread is attributed to on-campus protocols.

Strategy 1-4: Employ weekly rapid-testing of student-athletes as an asymptomatic surveillance tool to prevent COVID spread among teams.
  ◆ Feb. 9: Some Glens Falls sports to resume/begin for four-week Winter season (*key communication)

Outcome 1-5: Eligible students and staff can easily and comfortably receive the Pfizer COVID vaccine from Warren County Public Health nurses inside the Glens Falls Middle School cafeteria, with prior authorization from parents/guardians.

Strategy 1-5: As county vaccine supply increases, provide facilities, support, and advance communication/promotion efforts for student vaccine clinics. Expand to booster dose clinics for faculty/staff, and later, students.
  ◆ April 24: GFHS on-site vaccine clinic next week for 16-17-18 year olds with supporting documents
  ◆ May 24: GFHS/MS COVID vaccine clinic confirmation
  ◆ Oct. 1: Pfizer booster vaccine now available to staff Tuesday!
  ◆ Vaccine clinic promotional graphics and sample messages

EVALUATION

• Outcome 1-1: Students and staff can consistently remain in school for learning because they understand and buy into health and safety protocols. They are able to decipher which cohorts of students attend in-person on what schedules. They modify personal behaviors for the continued health of all.
  ○ District made it to late October before our first COVID case in school; Only had to pivot to extended remote learning once in January.
Special note: A comprehensive stakeholder survey was developed and presented to leadership in December 2021 as an essential component of effective COVID communication evaluation. This survey, although vigorously advocated, was not approved for distribution. It is included here to demonstrate formal evaluation technique and data collection that would have been deployed. (*key communication)

- **Outcome 1-2**: Students and staff members voluntarily participate in a school-based, district-run COVID-19 rapid-testing program to help prevent asymptomatic spread, and later, to allow student-athletes to participate in higher-risk sports.
  - Approximately 484 rapid tests were completed between January and mid-March, with two (2) positives detected. We achieved ZERO student refusals at the point of testing!
  - Media coverage of the testing program was generally positive: Spectrum, WNYT, WNYT in-depth.
  - “The Nosey Swab Swipe” videos were viewed a collective 1,534 times across Vimeo and Facebook platforms

  ➔ **Outcome 1-3**: Students and staff can safely transition back into the classroom after a multi-week emergency shutdown brought on by reckless behavior of school community members. Families know how to access resources during the period of remote learning.
    - Families district-wide picked up nearly 600 meal bags at the outset of the closure. Most elementary families also picked up student supply totes.

  ➔ **Outcome 1-4**: Student-athletes can more safely compete in a shortened winter sports season. No COVID spread is attributed to on-campus protocols.
    - More than 100 student-athletes were able to compete on Varsity winter sports teams
    - No additional COVID spread was attributable to a lapse in on-campus protocols

  ➔ **Outcome 1-5**: Eligible students and staff can easily and comfortably receive the Pfizer COVID vaccine from Warren County Public Health nurses inside the Glens Falls Middle School cafeteria, with prior authorization from parents/guardians.
    - Between May 2021 and February 2022, 222 individuals received a first dose or booster dose of COVID vaccine inside the GFMS cafeteria